

Acts 8:26-39 (Contemporary English Version)

²⁶The Lord's angel said to Philip, "Go south along the desert road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza."

²⁷So Philip left. An important Ethiopian official happened to be going along that road in his chariot. He was the chief treasurer for Candace, the Queen of Ethiopia. The official had gone to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was now on his way home. He was sitting in his chariot, reading the book of the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹The Spirit told Philip to catch up with the chariot. ³⁰Philip ran up close and heard the man reading aloud from the book of Isaiah. Philip asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

³¹The official answered, "How can I understand unless someone helps me?" He then invited Philip to come up and sit beside him.

³²The man was reading the passage that said, "He was led like a sheep on its way to be killed. He was silent as a lamb whose wool is being cut off, and he did not say a word. ³³He was treated like a nobody and did not receive a fair trial. How can he have children, if his life is snatched away?"

³⁴The official said to Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or about someone else?"

³⁵So Philip began at this place in the Scriptures and explained the good news about Jesus.

³⁶⁻³⁷As they were going along the road, they came to a place where there was some water. The official said, "Look! Here is some water. Why can't I be baptized?" ³⁸He ordered the chariot to stop. Then they both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹After they had come out of the water, the Lord's Spirit took Philip away. The official never saw him again, but he was very happy as he went on his way.

Discuss the following questions. If you are in a larger group, you may want to divide into groups of three for this discussion. You may then decide to report back to the larger group (particularly concerning the last question) or to move directly to prayer time.

1. Have you ever read a passage in the Bible that was confusing or did not make sense to you? What did you do about that?
2. How did the Ethiopian official respond to Scripture?
3. Tell of a time when you experienced a challenge to do something new or different because of your encounter with Scripture.
4. What might God be calling our group to do through this particular Scripture passage?

Prayer: God, we thank you for giving us your Word, the Bible. Help us to see Scripture as more than just words on a page. Speak to us, renew us, challenge us, and send us out into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit to share your good news with others. Amen.